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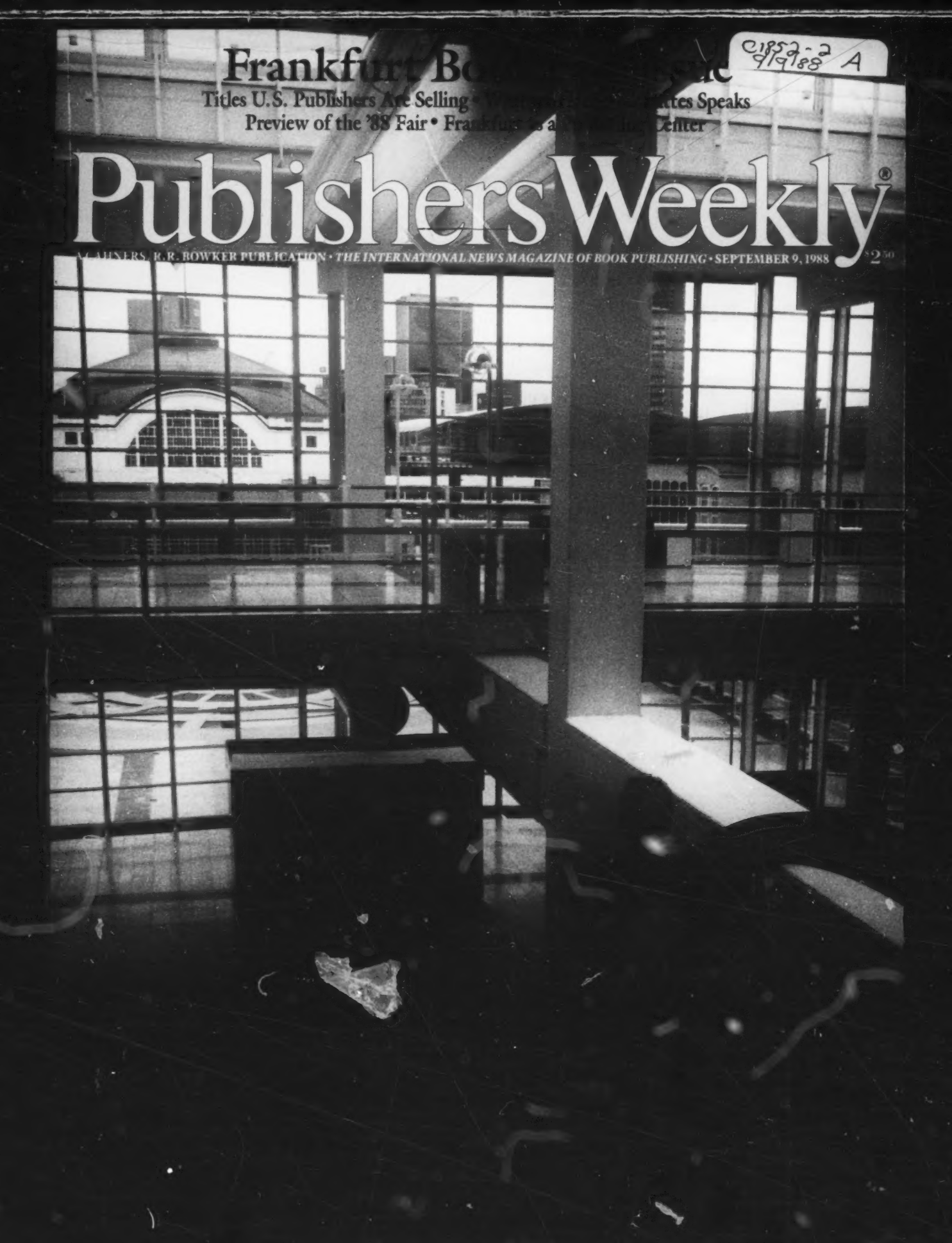

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Balancing the Books

U.S. Exports, Imports Almost Equal in 1987

BY CHANDLER B. GRANNIS

In 1987, following a year in which U.S. book imports exceeded exports for the first time in memory, the latter recovered enough to bring the two totals almost into balance. Shipments of American books abroad were at least $739.3 million in value, while book imports came to about $743.8 million. The export-to-import ratio for 1987 was therefore about 49.8 to 50.2, compared with 46 to 54 in 1986. In contrast, the 1982 exports had shown a 67 to 33 ratio to imports.

According to William F. Lofquist of the International Trade Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, the export trend is increasingly favorable. In the first five months of 1988, he reports, book exports rose 20%–25% in both dollars and units, while imports were up about 10% in dollars and down about 5% in units. [Lofquist has supplied *PW* with Department of Commerce printouts from which we have produced the tables shown here.]

The 1987 export totals were 22.4% higher in dollar value than those of 1986; the import figure also rose, but by only 6%. America's actual international trade in books is larger than the figures shown here can indicate, but how much larger is impossible to say; the U.S. Department of Commerce, which compiles the figures, does not take account the undoubtedly sizable number of export shipments valued under $500, or of import shipments valued under $250.

Table A shows export increases in most Department of Commerce categories, with declines in the Bibles and Encyclopedias groups. Table B shows increases in all reported categories except books in languages other than English.

Shifts in business with individual countries show interesting differences. Table C shows major increases in 1987 export sales to Taiwan, Canada, Japan, U.K., India, Brazil, Saudi Arabia and other nations, and sharp declines in shipments to China (P.R.) and Mexico.

Imports from various countries, Table D, indicate spectacular increases in 1987 for Korea (Rep.), Tai-

TABLE A

1986–1987 U.S. BOOK EXPORTS
Shipments Valued over $500

	$ 1985	$ 1986	% CHG.	1985 UNITS	1986 UNITS	% CHG.
Bibles, Testaments & Other Religious Books (2703020)	$ 33,874,307	$ 31,768,687	-6.2	46,275,876	37,722,886	-18.5
Dictionaries & Thesauruses (2703040)	4,725,970	5,528,987	+17.0	742,196	798,145	+7.5
Encyclopedias (2703060)	32,356,436	29,567,216	-8.6	5,536,458	4,587,352	-17.1
Textbooks, Workbooks & Standardized Tests (2703070)	112,377,028	140,853,541	+25.3	16,347,662	19,158,094	+17.2
Technical, Scientific & Professional Books (2703080)	156,555,078	194,187,973	+24	29,857,731	38,625,832	+29.4
Paperbound Mass Market Books (2704020)	40,898,773	51,845,636	+28.8	33,299,603	43,574,972	+30.9
Books Not Specially Provided for (2704040)	210,787,351	269,796,403	+28.0	87,205,160	114,410,535	+31.2
Children's Picture & Coloring Books (7375200)	7,555,664	9,274,858	+22.8	–	–	–
TOTAL EXPORTS	**$604,033,069**	**$739,314,267**	+22.4	–	–	–

SOURCE for Tables A, B and C: Department of Commerce; compiled by the writer from printouts supplied by William S. Lofquist, Industry Specialist (Printing and Publishing), International Trade Administration

wan and Singapore, and large increases for Hong Kong, Israel and Colombia. Several of these countries have recently increased the amount of printing they are doing for U.S. publishers, which is reflected in the figures. This, as Lofquist points out, is partly because the demise of the manufacturing clause in the copyright law makes it possible to buy more printing abroad, and partly because governments in these countries are giving support to their printers.

Some of the same countries that print for U.S. publishers are also among those that are buying more U.S. books—because of both the decline in the dollar and U.S. government efforts to combat massive book piracy. □

TABLE B

1986–1987 U.S. BOOK IMPORTS
Shipments Valued over $250

	$ 1986	$ 1987	% CHG.	1986 UNITS	1987 UNITS	% CHG.
Bibles, Prayerbooks (2702520	$ 15,038,156	$ 16,086,429	+ 7.0	12,859,531	14,049,275	+ 9.3
Books, Foreign Language (2702540)	37,738,941	35,278,985	- 6.5	22,114,817	22,442,193	+1.5
Books, Not Specially Provided for, wholly or in part the work of an author who is a U.S. domiciliary (2702560)	26,128,615	29,850,263	+14.2	57,982,639	58,633,432	+1.1
Other Books (2702580)	607,969,899	644,708,677	+ 6.0	510,550,155	505,322,125	–1.0
Children's Picture & Coloring Books (7375200)	14,567,999	17,891,266	+22.8	–	–	–
TOTAL IMPORTS	**$701,438,610**	**$743,815,620**	+ 6.0	–	–	–

TABLE C

1986–1987 U.S. BOOK EXPORTS
Shipments Valued over $500

	$ 1986	$ 1987	% CHG.
Canada	$206,203,780	$289,741,297	+40.5
United Kingdom	79,067,346	109,132,002	+38.0
Australia	56,945,259	58,194,896	+2.2
Japan	34,827,058	50,514,449	+45.0
Netherlands	22,177,779	23,592,807	+6.4
W. Germany	14,467,329	17,930,210	+23.9
India	10,477,379	13,890,950	+37.5
Brazil	9,702,609	13,322,612	+37.3
France	9,913,069	11,730,366	+18.3
Philippine Rep.	9,624,891	11,671,740	+21.3
Mexico	15,799,004	11,654,640	-26.2
Singapore	10,477,379	10,810,067	+3.2
Rep. South Africa	6,860,296	8,036,522	+17.1
Ireland	7,345,706	7,764,495	+5.7
China (PRC)	17,505,469	5,913,697	-66.2
Hong Kong	5,550,831	5,869,945	+5.7
New Zealand	4,523,415	5,743,458	+27.0
Italy	4,122,343	4,950,574	+20.1
Saudi Arabia	3,516,641	4,740,794	+34.8
China, Taiwan	2,842,508	4,470,620	+57.3
*TOTAL	$604,033,669	$739,314,267	+22.4

*Includes figures for the countries not specifically listed here

TABLE D

1986–1987 U.S. BOOK IMPORTS
Shipments Valued over $250

	$ 1986	$ 1987	% CHG.
United Kingdom	$175,113,256	$188,301,480	+7.5
Japan	125,925,445	129,344,395	+2.7
Canada	104,293,065	97,354,793	-6.7
Hong Kong	54,284,854	74,542,998	+37.3
Italy	47,908,722	42,796,144	-10.7
W. Germany	35,037,710	36,400,360	+3.9
Singapore	15,953,384	26,363,319	+65.3
Korea, Rep.	7,880,650	14,399,067	+82.7
Netherlands	12,760,656	13,953,242	+9.3
Belgium	18,160,365	11,783,656	–35.1
France	12,362,195	11,431,722	-7.5
China,Taiwan	6,289,152	10,713,170	+70.3
Switzerland	10,344,613	7,682,728	-25.7
Mexico	8,942,945	6,742,875	-24.6
Israel	4,433,522	5,897,993	+33.0
Colombia	4,164,476	5,383,768	+29.3
*TOTAL	$701,438,619	$743,815,620	+6.0

*Includes figures for the countries not specifically listed here